

‘Skinny Dragons’ welcomes new commander

By Lt. Mark Brummett
VP-4 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

With few variations, Patrol Squadron change of command ceremonies are identical to every other in the fleet.

Whether held on the fantail of a destroyer, the hangar deck of an aircraft carrier, or in the hangar of an aviation unit, the heart of the ceremony is the formal reading of official orders.

Command passes upon the salute and utterance by the relieving officer, “I relieve you, Sir.” The officer being relieved returns the salute and responds, “I stand relieved.” This simple ceremony reflects the dedication of free men and women serving their nation proudly.

Patrol Squadron Four (VP-4) held a change of command ceremony on April 6 in Hanger 104, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay as family, friends, distinguished guests, and the entire squadron looked on.

Cmdr. Doug Yancey became the 52nd commanding officer of Patrol Squadron Four to take command of the Skinny Dragons. This marked the end of Cmdr Craig Whitaker’s command tour, while ushering in new executive efficer, Cmdr. Tyrone Payton.

Among the distinguished guests was guest speaker, Rear Adm. Michael Holmes, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Force U.S. Pacific Fleet. Praising the accomplishments of Cmdr. Whitaker, the admiral raised the bar and challenged Yancey to continue the tradition of excellence.

During the ceremony, both Whitaker and Yancey thanked the people who made the ceremony special. Special thanks were offered to the members of the VP-4 color guard, the Seventh Fleet Navy Band, and all their family and friends who traveled from across the country to see this event.

“I would like to offer my thanks for an outstanding performance of everyone that worked so hard setting up this change of command ceremony. Your pride as a Skinny Dragon is evident everywhere we look.”

A traditional cake cutting and reception followed the ceremony at the Kaneohe Bay Officer’s Club, where Chief Petty Officers and Officers alike celebrated the event and reflected over the past year while looking toward the future.

Cmdr. Whitaker leaves the Skinny Dragons after a year of unrivaled accomplishments. The squadron once again earned the Battle Efficiency ‘E’ award for operational excellence after a highly successful Western Pacific deployment.

While supporting Seventh Fleet operations, VP-4 flew over 4,800 mishap free hours, while detached to 13 countries. During the six-month deployment, 20 search and rescue missions resulted in VP-4 personnel being credited with saving 22 lives.

A member of VP-4 since March of last year, Cmdr. Doug Yancey took the helm as Executive Officer. A native of Lancaster, Ca., he was commissioned through the Naval Aviation Officer Candidate School in Pensacola, Fla. in September 1982.

After tours with VP-31 and VP-19 at Naval Air Station Moffett Field, Calif., he was selected for the Personnel Exchange Program with the Netherlands.

In August 1988, he reported to the Royal Dutch Navy 321 Squadron and earned designations as Patrol Plane Commander and Patrol Plane Instructor Pilot.

Cmdr. Yancey returned to the U.S. and completed tours with Patrol Squadron Five, Patrol Wing Eleven in Jacksonville, Fla., and the USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70)



AMH3 Blake Metcalf

Rear Adm. Michael Holmes congratulates new Skinny Dragon Skipper, Cmdr. Doug Yancey as he slices the ceremonial cake, as just relieved Cmdr. Craig Whitaker looks on.

home ported in Washington state, were he served as the Anti-Submarine Warfare Module Officer.

The new Executive Officer, Cmdr. Tyrone Payton will take over where Yancey left off. Born in Shreveport, La., Payton graduated from Louisiana Tech University with a Bachelor of Science degree.

After his designation as a Naval Aviator in 1984, Payton completed tours with VP-48 and, VP-31, the Fleet Replacement Squadron, at NAS Moffett Field, Calif., and the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) home ported in Alameda, Calif.

This is not Payton’s first tour with VP-4. In fact, he was recently assigned to the squadron during his Department

Head Tour just three years prior, serving as Safety Officer and Aviation Maintenance Officer.

“It’s good to see the maintenance personnel I used to work with that are still here. I’m excited to be back and they’re excited too,” said Payton.

Every change of command ceremony has an array of emotions as the squadron says goodbye to one commanding officer and welcomes in another.

As VP-4 continues into its 29th year of mishap free flying. Yancey told the Sailors of VP-4; “I look forward to working with each and everyone of you during the next year. Your expertise, dedication to service, and true devotion to the command has been inspiring. I promise to give you my best and support you at

New commander enlists son at change of command



Fleet Imaging Detachment, Kaneohe Bay photo

As his first official duty, new VP-4 Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Doug Yancey, enlists his son, Gabriel into the Navy as an Aviation Candidate. Gabriel will be attending Officer Candidate School in Pensacola, Fla. in January 2002.

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Patrol Squadron Four (VP-4) held its change of command ceremony on April 6 to the highest standards of Naval tradition, with a slight departure from the normal ceremony.

Immediately after Cmdr. Doug Yancey assumed command and became the 52nd commanding officer of the Skinny Dragons, he administered the enlistment oath to his son, Gabriel.

“After talking to the Naval recruiter, we thought what could be more special, but to have this happen during the Change of Command ceremony, among family and friends,” Yancey stated.

Gabriel Yancey, now living in Jacksonville, Fla., will receive a Bachelor degree in Psychology from the University of North Florida in December 2001.

After exploring several career opportunities, Gabriel didn’t think civilian life could offer him all that he wanted. Reared in military tradition, he became familiar with his father’s occupation as a Naval

Officer and Aviator and solicited his father’s advice toward becoming an officer himself.

The Yancey family is starting quite an aviation tradition themselves, as Gabriel is set to become a third generation aviator to fly in the armed forces of the United States.

The tradition began with Gabriel’s grandfather, Marion H. Yancey, who served in the U.S. Air Force from 1951 to 1953 followed a career as a civilian flight test engineer at Edwards Air Force Base from 1953 to 1971. Gabriel will report to NAS Pensacola for Officer Candidate School (OCS) as an Aviation Candidate in January 2002.

In yet another twist of fate, upon completion of OCS, Gabriel will be commissioned an ensign nearly 20 years to the day of his father’s commissioning back in 1982.

Alongside family and friends, Gabriel’s mother, Gail, was beaming with pride as her family legacy continues with Navy values and commitment on the occasion of the two special events.